

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Town Selectboards Near Vermont Yankee **Send Letters Voicing Concerns**

At the request of town residents, the selectboards of 13 Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts towns in close proximity to the Entergy Corporation's Vermont Yankee nuclear reactor in Vernon, VT, have recently written to state and federal authorities expressing concerns about possible ways Vermont Yankee's shutdown in 2012 may impact their towns. In most cases, these selectboards have voted to send a letter drafted by the Safe & Green Campaign, a three-year-old grassroots education and outreach project based in towns within 20 miles of the reactor.

The letter, which is being sent to "Those With Authority Over the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station in Vernon, including the Entergy Nuclear Corporation, the Vermont Legislature and Public Service Board, and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission," begins as follows:

"As of February 24, 2010, when the Vermont Senate voted 26-4 in opposition to the extended operation of Vermont Yankee's original 40-year license on March 21, 2012, the plant is now scheduled to cease operation on or before that date. This scheduled closure is likely to affect nearby towns and cities in the tri-state area in a number of ways. Because it is the responsibility of local selectboards and town/city councils to protect and enhance the safety and well-being of our towns and cities, we are writing this letter to urge all the appropriate authorities to take whatever steps may be necessary in order to minimize any negative impacts that Vermont Yankee's closure may have on its workers, local residents, and the environment."

The letter calls for Vermont Yankee workers to be given "first preference when workers are hired for the multi-year decommissioning and site cleanup process," as well as "opportunities for re-training for available jobs at decent wages, including jobs in the rapidly expanding 'green energy' sector."

In addition to voicing public and environmental health concerns related to decommissioning and site cleanup, the letter also addresses Vermont Yankee's last year of operation:

"(D)uring this final period as the reactor continues to age and minor accidents and radioactive leakages continue to occur (if they do), residents and officials of nearby

towns and cities be assured that there will be extra attention to maintenance and repair of all systems associated with the reactor, coupled with heightened inspections, monitoring, and testing to minimize the possibility of a major accident and ensure that people, animals, and the environment are not exposed to any additional risks of breathing, drinking, or otherwise ingesting radioactivity,”

The letter goes on to say that:

“(A)ny tendency to delay or cancel needed maintenance and repairs during the reactor’s final months of operation be strenuously resisted, and that if circumstances warrant, Vermont Yankee be shut down permanently *before* its scheduled retirement date.”

Finally, the letter requests that “all local selectboards and town/city councils be kept informed in a timely way...of all relevant plans, decisions, and other developments related to Vermont Yankee that might affect our towns and cities.”

And it proposes that a “‘citizens advisory board’ be formed, with its members appointed by local selectboards and town/city councils, so as to facilitate on-going, two-way communication regarding all of these matters.”

The towns whose selectboards have signed the letter as drafted by the Safe & Green Campaign (and quoted above) include: Putney, Westminster, and Dummerston, VT; Richmond, NH; and New Salem, Wendell, Warwick, Montague, Leverett, Colrain, and Buckland, MA. Also, the Marlboro, VT, selectboard approved the same letter but added an addendum. The Winchester, NH, selectboard approved the spirit of the Safe & Green letter but preferred to send their own letter expressing similar concerns. The letter is currently under consideration by the Keene, NH, city council. And the Gill, MA, selectboard approved the letter with a few minor changes. Two town selectboards have declined to sign the letter, in Newfane, VT, and Chesterfield, NH.

Copies of the letter are being sent to the board of health in each town, the Windham County Regional Commission (VT), the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA), the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (NH), and elected local, state, and federal officials representing VT, MA, and NH towns within 20 miles of Vermont Yankee.

The full text of the letter as drafted by the Safe & Green Campaign is attached.

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